

## **Pension Reserve Fund of Republic of Srpska wins the silver Best Sovereign Reserve Fund category at the IPE Awards 2016**

Pension Reserve Fund of Republic of Srpska (PREF) won the prestigious silver European title of Sovereign Reserve Fund at the IPE Awards on 01 December in Berlin. The IPE Awards are the largest annual gathering of pension funds in Europe. It was the second time the young national reserve scheme entered the Awards.

The scheme is a small sovereign reserve plan in the autonomous largely Serb region of Bosnia Herzegovina with some €131 million under management.

PREF's key objective is to generate a profit to pay a dividend to Bosnia and Herzegovina's first pillar pension and benefits fund, the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of the Republic of Srpska (PDIF), which effectively owns PREF.

PREF's investments are now wider ranging and include fixed income and debt instruments. 2015 marked a year of political instability, decreasing bank lending, rising unemployment and falling interest rates for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nonetheless, it achieved a GDP real growth rate of 3% and kept inflation at 1%. In this environment, the fund continued to restructure its debt portfolio and began building the framework for infrastructure and SME fund investments.

"Starting from scratch, this bold grass roots fund deserves backing, with many objectives: building a pension system, supporting industry, overturning bankruptcies," commented one judge about the scheme.

At the event, Michael Sterner, head of sales Germany at the award's sponsor, Generali Investments, presented the trophy. Congratulating the winners, Liam Kennedy, editor of Investment & Pension Europe, which hosted the event, said: "The record number of entries across the 43 categories from pension funds from 24 European countries managing assets for over 90 million people and the resulting high standards they create highlight the outstanding achievement of all the winners and short-listed funds."

This year marked the 16th year the IPE European Pension Fund Awards have been held and the second time they went to Berlin.